

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002375

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/02/2025

TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [KISL](#) [IZ](#) [KINR](#)

SUBJECT: BADR CORPS AND MUC CONDUCT MUQTADA

AL-SADR-FACILITATED NEGOTIATIONS ON "LETTER OF PROMISE"

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Henry S. Ensher.

Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

1. (C) Summary. Muqtada al-Sadr representatives facilitated discussions between Badr Corps and Muslim Ulema Council (MUC) officials on Hareth al-Dhari's May 18 comments accusing the Badr Corps of assassinating Sunni clerics. The group met May 28 in the residence of Transitional National Assembly (TNA) Sadrism member Baha al-Araji in Baghdad to come to terms on a proposed "Letter of Promise" agreeing to cast away past rhetoric and work to minimize sectarian violence. Despite initial progress in the discussions, no agreement has been signed. Badr Corps representatives say they are committed to continued engagement with MUC. Muqtada al-Sadr continues to burnish his image as a nationalist leader. End Summary.

MUC Accusations

2. (C) In a televised press conference on May 18, MUC leader Hareth al-Dhari accused police commandos and the Badr Corps of killing two Sunni clerics that week as well as participating in several other earlier killings targeting Sunnis. Shia notable and SCIRI head Abdul Aziz al-Hakim responded by calling for calm and an end to accusations that could lead to sectarian war. Badr Corps chief Hadi al-Amiri on May 19 denounced the accusations. Al-Amiri told PolCouns on May 21 that he was doing his best to keep things calm. PolCouns emphasized that it is important for senior leaders on all sides to keep young, impressionable men off the street in this sensitive period. Al-Amiri said that Sunni notable Adnan Dulaimi (Sunni Waqf) visited SCIRI leader Abdul Aziz al-Hakim on May 20. According to Al-Amiri, both men agreed that all mosques (Sunni and Shia) should not be used for political or military purposes.

Negotiations Commence

3. (C) Sadrism TNA member Baha al-Araji and Iraqi Hizbullah TNA member Abd al-Karim Muhammadawi told PolOff May 31 that discussions on May 28 between the MUC and Badr Corps over a proposed "Letter of Promise" were initially encouraging. Al-Araji asserted that the discussions were initiated by Muqtada al-Sadr and that his brother, Hazim Al-Araji, and Sadr Bureau notables Abdul Hadi al-Daraji and Shaykh Nasser al-Saadi were facilitating these discussions "in the interest of Iraq." Badr Corps Political Advisor Abdul Kareem al-Naqib told PolOff on May 31 that the Badr Corps refused to sign the letter without an apology from Hareth al-Dhari or presentation of hard evidence of Badr Corps participation in the recent attacks on Sunni clerics. Al-Naqib said that Badr Corps leader Hadi al-Amiri went to visit Muqtada al-Sadr on May 29 in Najaf and the two men agreed to continue engaging the MUC.

4. (C) Al-Naqib said that the MUC representatives (Al-Rawi and Al-Ani) alleged that the Badr Corps participated in MNF-I operations in Fallujah and helped the Iraqi Government manipulate the elections results through their control of elections security. According to Al-Naqib, Al-Rawi and Al-Ani also asserted that the Badr Corps is predominant in MOI's Wolf Brigade now conducting operations in Baghdad and that this unit was likely behind the Sunni clerics' deaths. Al-Naqib told PolOff that, in response, he detailed several acts of political violence directed against the Shia. Al-Naqib said that while the MUC represents a minority of Sunnis, he believes that the Shia must engage in these discussions in the interest of national unity. According to Al-Naqib, the MUC representatives originally proposed signing the Letter of Promise to "wash away the past".

5. (C) Hadi al-Amiri told PolOff on June 1 that the Badr Corps is willing to sign "100 letters" if they receive an apology. Conversely, Al-Amiri said that if

there is such evidence of Badr Corps militia taking part in these killings, he would personally seek justice against these criminals and drop the lawsuit against Hareth al-Dhari. PolOff urged al-Amiri to avoid harsh rhetoric that could disrupt efforts to promote inclusion in the constitutional process.

16. (C) Al-Amiri said that the Badr Corps is committed to continue engaging the MUC. Al-Naqib was much more ominous in his comments. He said that if Al-Dhari does not apologize, he could find himself unable to move freely about Iraq, especially in the middle Euphrates region and the South. After Poloff criticized the implied threat, Al-Naqib said that he simply meant that Al-Dhari would be met by public demonstrations that would be peaceful but would effectively limit his ability to move about the country.

Muqtada's Role

17. (C) Al-Amiri told PolOff that he felt compelled to personally meet Al-Sadr as he is now a legitimate political force. According to Al-Amiri, Al-Sadr urged a peaceful resolution to the conflict between MUC and Badr. Al-Sadr also reportedly told Al-Amiri that he is committed to joining the political process but from a distance through his key lieutenants. Al-Naqib was much more blunt in his analysis of Al-Sadr's involvement. He told PolOff that he thought Al-Sadr was being opportunistic and that his actions should be watched closely.

18. (C) Comment: The Badr Corps-MUC discussions may not result in a written agreement. Both sides' willingness to engage is positive. Both sides also appear to be sensitive to the fragile, simultaneous outreach efforts to promote at Sunni participation in the constitutional drafting process. The seeming contradiction between Muqtada's willingness to play peacemaker and his harsh rhetoric against the US is explained by his drive to be seen as a true "nationalist" leader. His remarks demanding immediate release of detainees should be seen in the context of his key lieutenants' willingness to engage the Iraqi government on facilitating additional releases of detained Sadrist. The restraint demonstrated by the Sadr Bureau in reaction to the May 23 car bomb attack on the edge of Sadr City was also indicative of their growing willingness to engage in politics rather than combat. End Comment.

19. (U) REO HILLA, REO BASRA, REO MOSUL, and REO KIRKUK minimize considered.

Satterfield